

H1N1 FAQ

Revised 11/6/2009

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Where can I find information on H1N1?

For more information on travel safety and U.S. Government policy during a pandemic, please see the State Department's "Pandemic/Avian Influenza" and "Remain in Country" Fact Sheets at <http://travel.state.gov>. Further information about 2009-H1N1 Influenza, including steps you can take to stay healthy, can be found at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control website at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>, the U.S. Government Pandemic Influenza website at <http://www.flu.gov>, and the World Health Organization website at <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>.

What percentage of travelers to China is quarantined?

Many travelers arrive at China's borders daily; the majority enters without difficulty. However, various factors, such as a traveler's proximity to an H1N1-infected passenger on a plane, make it impossible to predict an individual's chances of being quarantined. Furthermore, travelers with even a slightly elevated body temperature have been placed into hospital quarantine.

In preparation for the fall/winter 2009 influenza season, the Chinese State Council tasked local and provincial governments with strengthening their disease control and mitigation measures. Local and provincial policies towards 2009-H1N1 Influenza continue to evolve.

I've been quarantined in a hospital or hotel. What can the U.S. Embassy and Consulates do to help me?

Many quarantined U.S. citizens reported that the amount of food and water supplied is inadequate or that the sanitary conditions are unacceptable. The U.S. Embassy and Consulates can contact local health authorities and bring such concerns to their attention. The U.S. Embassy and Consulates can also help quarantined citizens contact family members, chaperones, or friends and assist with language translation, if necessary, during emergencies.

Can the U.S. Embassy and Consulates get me out of quarantine?

The U.S. Embassy and Consulates are unable to secure the immediate release of private U.S. citizens who have been detained or quarantined in accordance with local public health and legal authorities.

Do I have to follow public health regulations?

Foreigners, including U.S. citizens, are obliged to follow local procedures and regulations regarding quarantines and other public-health measures while in China. The U.S. Government strongly suggests that U.S. citizens cooperate with local officials regarding quarantine procedures.

Will I be given the option to leave on the next plane home?

To date, Chinese health authorities have not permitted quarantined travelers to depart the country until officially released from quarantine.

Am I supposed to report my quarantine to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate?

The U.S. Embassy in Beijing and the U.S. Consulates in Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu, and Shenyang keep track of U.S. citizens quarantined in China. If you, your loved one, or a member of your traveling party is quarantined, please send an email or call the American Citizen Services office in the appropriate

consular district with the quarantined person's name, date of birth, passport number and date of quarantine.

U.S. Embassy in Beijing: amcitbeijing@state.gov

(Beijing, Tianjin, Shandong, Shanxi, Hebei, Henan, Hubei, Inner Mongolia, Shaanxi, Jiangxi, Hunan, Ningxia, Qinghai, Gansu and Xinjiang)

U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai: shanghaiacs@state.gov

(Shanghai, Jiangsu, Anhui and Zhejiang)

U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou: guangzhouacs@state.gov

(Guangdong, Fujian, Guangxi and Hainan)

U.S. Consulate General in Chengdu: consularchengdu@state.gov

(Sichuan, Chongqing, Guizhou, Tibet and Yunnan)

U.S. Consulate General in Shenyang: shenyangacs@state.gov

(Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning)

**Will the Chinese Government reimburse me for lost travel expenses? What about flight change fees?
Can the U.S. Embassy help change my flights?**

The Chinese Government will not compensate quarantined travelers for expenses. Travelers to China are urged to consider purchasing travel insurance to protect against losses in the event they are quarantined. Airline policies regarding flight change fees vary; please contact your airline or tour agent to inquire about fees and to change your travel plans.

I plan to fly from one Chinese city to another. Are domestic passengers subject to temperature checks?

According to the Ministry of Health, the Chinese Government does not have a policy regarding temperature screenings for domestic flights, and on-board temperature checks have ceased. Before traveling, it is best to check with your airline or tour agent to get the latest information on H1N1 screening practices at your point of departure and destination.

QUARANTINE CONDITIONS AND PROCEDURES

Can I move to a better hotel or hospital of my own choosing?

Travelers are usually quarantined in specially designated hospitals or hotels and are generally unable to relocate.

What about home or private quarantine? In many cases, authorities have offered residents the option of home quarantine and travelers the option of quarantine in their accommodations. If you have been told that you will be quarantined, you may wish to ask health officials if either of these options is possible.

When can I be released?

Only health authorities can determine when quarantined travelers may be released.

I've been waiting for my test results and it's taking forever. Can you help me get them faster?

The U.S. Embassy and Consulates are not able to influence laboratories to prioritize U.S. citizens during the testing process.

Can I have food, books, or clothing brought into the quarantine facility?

Policies regarding outside deliveries of food and other goods vary from facility to facility.

I have special dietary needs. Will the quarantine hospital or hotel provide special food for me?

The U.S. Embassy and Consulates will request accommodations of special food or medication from health officials. However, not all facilities can accommodate all dietary needs. Furthermore, some provinces do not have access to all medications used by Westerners, and in more remote areas, Western-quality medications can be especially difficult to procure.

I'm in quarantine and can't understand Chinese. None of the staff speaks English. What do I do?

The U.S. Embassy and Consulates can request that the quarantine facility provide access to English-language medical staff and interpreters. However, such access may be limited. In cases of emergency, the U.S. Embassy and Consulates can assist quarantined travelers with translation.

MINORS

My child is traveling with a school group and has been quarantined after testing positive for H1N1. Can my child be accompanied by an adult guardian? Who will be able to approve my child's course of treatment?

The U.S. Embassy and Consulates have received reports of some children being separated from their parents during quarantine because only the parent or only the child tested positive for 2009-H1N1 or exhibited symptoms. Travelers are advised that Chinese health authorities have not issued a country-wide policy on keeping family members together in quarantine, and the practice of allowing young children to remain with their parents or guardians varies by quarantine facility. In some hospitals, parents have been denied access to their quarantined children. In these situations, the possibility exists that Chinese medical personnel may administer medications to minors without parental permission.

The school where my child is studying has ordered foreign students confined to a certain area of campus. Is this an official government quarantine? Can they leave if they want?

Some local authorities are being exceedingly cautious and are imposing mandatory quarantine periods on all U.S. citizen travelers hosted by their institutions. Because implementation of these local policies is established by Chinese officials and host organizations and may vary by location, you should check frequently with your host institution before departing for China.

ANTIVIRAL MEDICATIONS AND VACCINES

Some people in my group tested positive for H1N1. Should I take Tamiflu® or Relenza® as a prophylactic?

Please consult your doctor for medical advice.

Are Chinese-made H1N1 vaccines safe?

Travelers are advised that 2009-H1N1 vaccines approved by foreign regulatory bodies might be commercially available in China in the upcoming months. However, the U.S. Government has evaluated

only those vaccines that are licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. For a list of approved vaccines, please see the U.S. Food and Drug Administration website at <http://www.fda.gov/BiologicsBloodVaccines/Vaccines/ApprovedProducts/ucm181950.htm>. Please ask your doctor for guidance on Chinese-manufactured H1N1 vaccines.

I read that the U.S. Embassy and Consulates have stocks of Tamiflu® and U.S.-manufactured H1N1 vaccine. Are you planning to vaccinate U.S. citizens in China?

Legal restrictions and a lack of sufficient resources prevent the U.S. Department of State from providing private citizens with supplies, medications, or medical treatment in the event of a pandemic. There are several medical facilities in China that may have vaccines and other medical supplies. Please see our website at http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/acs_health.html for general health information and provider lists.